

had made him what he was. "It is nearly done now, Marie," he said to Madame Goesler one evening. She only pressed his hand in answer. His condition was too well understood between them to allow of her speaking to him of any possible recovery. "It has been a great comfort to me that I have known you," he said.

"Oh no!"

"A great comfort; only I wish it had been sooner. I could have talked to you about things which I never did talk of to any one. I wonder why I should have been a duke, and another man a servant."

"God Almighty ordained such difference."

"I'm afraid I have not done it well; but I have tried—indeed I have tried." Then she told him he had ever lived as a great nobleman ought to live. And, after a fashion, she herself believed what she was saying. Nevertheless, her nature was much nobler than his; and she knew that no man should dare to live idly as the Duke had lived.

CHAPTER XXVI, THE DUKE'S WILL.

ON the ninth day after Madame Goesler's arrival the Duke died, and Lady Glencora Palliser became Duchess of Omnium. But the change probably was much greater to Mr. Palliser than to his wife. It would seem to be impossible to imagine a greater change than had come upon him. As to rank, he was raised from that of a simple commoner to the very top of the tree. He was made master of almost unlimited wealth, garters, and lord-lieutenancies; and all the added grandeurs which come from high influence when joined to high rank were sure to be his. But he was no more moved by these things than would have been a god or a block of wood. His uncle was dead; but his uncle had been an old man, and his grief on that score was moderate. As soon as his uncle's body had been laid in the family vault at Gatherum men would call him Duke of Omnium; and then he could never sit again in the House of Commons. It was in that light, and in that light only, that he regarded the matter. To his uncle it had been every thing to be Duke of Omnium. To Plantagenet Palliser it was less than nothing. He had lived among men and women with titles all his life, himself untitled, but regarded by them as one of themselves, till the thing, in his estimation, had come to seem almost nothing. One man walked out of a room before another man; and he, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had, during a part of his career, walked out of most rooms before most men. But he cared not at all whether he walked out first or last—and for him there was nothing else in it. It was a toy that would perhaps please his wife, but he doubted even whether she would not cease to be Lady Glencora with regret. In himself this thing that had happened had absolutely crushed him. He had won for himself by his own aptitudes and his own industry one special position in the empire, and that position, and that alone, was incompatible with the rank which he was obliged to assume! His case was very hard, and he felt it; but he made no complaint to human ears. "I suppose you must give up the Exchequer,"

his wife said to him. He shook his head, and made no reply. Even to her he could not explain his feelings.

I think, too, that she did regret the change in her name, though she was by no means indifferent to the rank. As Lady Glencora she had made a reputation which might very possibly fall away from her as Duchess of Omnium. Fame is a skittish jade, more fickle even than Fortune, and apt to shy and bolt and plunge away on very trifling causes. As Lady Glencora Palliser she was known to every one, and had always done exactly as she had pleased. The world in which she lived had submitted to her fantasies, and had placed her on a pedestal from which, as Lady Glencora, nothing could have moved her. She was by no means sure that the same pedestal would be able to carry the Duchess of Omnium. She must begin again, and such beginnings are dangerous. As Lady Glencora she had almost taken upon herself to create a rivalry in society to certain very distinguished, and indeed illustrious, people. There were only two houses in London, she used to say, to which she never went. The never was not quite true—but there had been something in it. She doubted whether as Duchess of Omnium she could go on with this. She must lay down her mischief, and abandon her eccentricity, and in some degree act like other duchesses. "The poor old man," she said to Madame Goesler; "I wish he could have gone on living a little longer." At this time the two ladies were alone together at Matching. Mr. Palliser, with the cousins, had gone to Gatherum, whither also had been sent all that remained of the late Duke, in order that fitting funeral obsequies might be celebrated over the great family vault.

"He would hardly have wished it himself, I think."

"One never knows; and as far as one can look into futurity, one has no idea what would be one's own feelings. I suppose he did enjoy life."

"Hardly, for the last twelve months," said Madame Goesler.

"I think he did. He was happy when you were about him, and he interested himself about things. Do you remember how much he used to think of Lady Eustace and her diamonds? When I first knew him he was too magnificent to care about any thing."

"I suppose his nature was the same."

"Yes, my dear, his nature was the same, but he was strong enough to restrain his nature, and wise enough to know that his magnificence was incompatible with ordinary interests. As he got to be older he broke down, and took up with mere mortal gossip. But I think it must have made him happier."

"He showed his weakness in coming to me," said Madame Goesler, laughing.

"Of course he did—not in liking your society, but in wanting to give you his name. I have often wondered what kind of things he used to say to that old Lady Hartleup. That was in his full grandeur, and he never condescended to speak much then. I used to think him so hard; but I suppose he was only acting his part. I used to call him the Grand Lama to Plantagenet when we were first married—before Planty was born. I shall always call him Silverbridge now instead of Planty."

"I would let others do that."

"Of course I was joking; but others will, and he will be spoiled. I wonder whether he will live to be a Grand Lama or a popular Minister. There can not be two positions further apart. My husband no doubt thinks a good deal of himself as a statesman and a clever politician—at least I suppose he does—but he has not the slightest reverence for himself as a nobleman. If the dear old Duke were hobbling along Piccadilly, he was conscious that Piccadilly was graced by his presence, and never moved without being aware that people looked at him, and whispered to each other, There goes the Duke of Omnium. Plantagenet considers himself inferior to a sweeper while on the crossing, and never feels any pride of place unless he is sitting on the Treasury Bench with his hat over his eyes."

"He'll never sit on the Treasury Bench again."

"No, poor dear. He's an Othello now with a vengeance, for his occupation is gone. I spoke to him about your friend and the foxes, and he told me to write to Mr. Fothergill. I will as soon as it's decent. I fancy a new duchess shouldn't write letters about foxes till the old Duke is buried. I wonder what sort of a will he'll have made. There's nothing I care twopence for except his pearls. No man in England had such a collection of precious stones. They'd been yours, my dear, if you had consented to be Mrs. O."

The Duke was buried, and the will was read, and Plantagenet Palliser was addressed as Duke of Omnium by all the tenantry and retainers of the family in the great hall of Gatherum Castle. Mr. Fothergill, who had upon occasion in former days been driven by his duty to remonstrate with the heir, was all submission. Planty Pall had come to the throne, and half a county was ready to worship him. But he did not know how to endure worship, and the half county declared that he was stern and proud, and more haughty even than his uncle. At every "Grace" that was flung at him he winced and was miserable, and declared to himself that he should never become accustomed to his new life. So he sat all alone, and meditated how he might best reconcile the forty-eight farthings which go to a shilling with that thorough-going useful decimal, fifty.

But his meditations did not prevent him from writing to his wife, and on the following morning Lady Glencora—as she shall be called now for the last time—received a letter from him which disturbed her a good deal. She was in her room when it was brought to her, and for an hour after reading it hardly knew how to see her guest and friend, Madame Goesler. The passage in the letter which produced this dismay was as follows: "He has left to Madame Goesler twenty thousand pounds, and all his jewels. The money may be very well; but I think he has been wrong about the jewelry. As to myself, I do not care a straw, but you will be sorry; and then people will talk. The lawyers will, of course, write to her; but I suppose you had better tell her. They seem to think that the stones are worth a great deal of money; but I have long learned never to believe any statement that is made to me. They are all here, and I suppose she will have to send some authorized per-

son to have them packed. There is a regular inventory, of which a copy shall be sent to her by post as soon as it can be prepared." Now it must be owned that the Duchess did begrudge her friend the Duke's collection of pearls and diamonds.

About noon they met. "My dear," she said, "you had better hear your good fortune at once. Read that—just that side. Plantagenet is wrong in saying that I shall regret it. I don't care a bit about it. If I want a ring or a brooch, he can buy me one. But I never did care about such things, and I don't now. The money is all just as it should be." Madame Goesler read the passage, and the blood mounted up into her face. She read it very slowly, and when she had finished reading it she was for a moment or two at a loss for words to express herself. "You had better send one of Garnett's people," said the Duchess, naming the house of a distinguished jeweler and goldsmith in London.

"It will hardly need," said Madame Goesler. "You had better be careful. There is no knowing what they are worth. He spent half his income on them, I believe, during part of his life." There was a roughness about the Duchess of which she was herself conscious, but which she could not restrain, though she knew that it betrayed her chagrin.

Madame Goesler came gently up to her, and touched her hand caressingly. "Do you remember," said Madame Goesler, "a small ring with a black diamond—I suppose it was a diamond—which he always wore?"

"I remember that he always did wear such a ring."

"I should like to have that," said Madame Goesler.

"You have them all—every thing. He makes no distinction."

"I should like to have that, Lady Glen—for the sake of the hand that wore it. But, as God is great above us, I will never take aught else that has belonged to the Duke."

"Not take them!"

"Not a gem; not a stone; not a shilling."

"But you must."

"I rather think that I can be under no such obligation," she said, laughing. "Will you write to Mr. Palliser—or, I should say, to the Duke—to-night, and tell him that my mind is absolutely made up?"

"I certainly shall not do that."

"Then I must. As it is, I shall have pleasant memories of his Grace. According to my ability I have endeavored to be good to him, and I have no stain on my conscience because of his friendship. If I took his money and his jewels—or rather your money and your jewels—do you think I could say as much?"

"Every body takes what any body leaves them by will."

"I will be an exception to the rule, Lady Glen. Don't you think that your friendship is more to me than all the diamonds in London?"

"You shall have both, my dear," said the Duchess, quite in earnest in her promise. Madame Goesler shook her head. "Nobody ever repudiates legacies. The Queen would take the jewels if they were left to her."

"I am not the Queen. I have to be more

careful what I do than any queen. I will take nothing under the Duke's will. I will ask a boon which I have already named, and if it be given me as a gift by the Duke's heir I will wear it till I die. You will write to Mr. Palliser?"

"I couldn't do it," said the Duchess.

"Then I will write myself." And she did write, and of all the rich things which the Duke of Omnium had left to her she took nothing but the little ring with the black stone which he had always worn on his finger.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN EDITOR'S WRATH.

ON that Sunday evening in London Mr. Low was successful in finding the Vice-Chancellor, and the great judge smiled and nodded, listened to the story, and acknowledged that the circumstances were very peculiar. He thought that an injunction to restrain the publication might be given at once upon Mr. Finn's affidavit; and that the peculiar circumstances justified the peculiarity of Mr. Low's application. Whether he would have said as much had the facts concerned the families of Mr. Joseph Smith and his son-in-law Mr. John Jones, instead of the Earl of Brentford and the Right Honorable Robert Kennedy, some readers will perhaps doubt, and may doubt also whether an application coming from some newly fledged barrister would have been received as graciously as that made by Mr. Low, Q. C. and M. P.—who would probably himself soon sit on some lofty legal bench. On the following morning Phineas and Mr. Low—and no doubt also Mr. Vice-Chancellor Pickering—obtained early copies of the *People's Banner*, and were delighted to find that Mr. Kennedy's letter did not appear in it. Mr. Low had made his calculation rightly. The editor, considering that he would gain more by having the young member of Parliament and the Standish family, as it were, in his hands than by the publication of a certainly libelous letter, had resolved to put the document back for at least twenty-four hours, even though the young member neither came nor wrote as he had promised. The letter did not appear, and before ten o'clock Phineas Finn had made his affidavit in a dingy little room behind the Vice-Chancellor's Court. The injunction was at once issued and was of such potency that should any editor dare to publish any paper therein prohibited, that editor and that editor's newspaper would assuredly be crumpled up in a manner very disagreeable, if not altogether destructive. Editors of newspapers are self-willed, arrogant, and stiff-necked, a race of men who believe much in themselves and little in any thing else, with no feelings of reverence or respect for matters which are august enough to other men; but an injunction from a Court of Chancery is a power which even an editor respects. At about noon Vice-Chancellor Pickering's injunction was served at the office of the *People's Banner* in Quartpot Alley, Fleet Street. It was done in duplicate—or perhaps in triplicate—so that there should be no evasion; and all manner of crumpling was threatened in the event of any touch of disobedience. All this happened on Monday, March the first, while the poor dying Duke was

waiting impatiently for the arrival of his friend at Matching. Phineas was busy all the morning till it was time that he should go down to the House. For as soon as he could leave Mr. Low's chambers in Lincoln's Inn he had gone to Judd Street to inquire as to the condition of the man who had tried to murder him. He there saw Mr. Kennedy's cousin, and received an assurance from that gentleman that Robert Kennedy should be taken down at once to Lough Linter. Up to that moment not a word had been said to the police as to what had been done. No more notice had been taken of the attempt to murder than might have been necessary had Mr. Kennedy thrown a clothes-brush at his visitor's head. There was the little hole in the post of the door with the bullet in it, just six feet above the ground; and there was the pistol, with five chambers still loaded, which Macpherson had cunningly secured on his return from church, and given over to the cousin that same evening. There was certainly no want of evidence, but nobody was disposed to use it.

At noon the injunction was served in Quartpot Alley, and was put into Mr. Slide's hands on his arrival at the office at three o'clock. That gentleman's duties required his attendance from three till five in the afternoon, and then again from nine in the evening till any hour in the morning at which he might be able to complete the *People's Banner* for that day's use. He had been angry with Phineas when the Sunday night passed without a visit or letter at the office, as a promise had been made that there should be either a visit or a letter; but he had felt sure, as he walked into the city from his suburban residence at Camden Town, that he would now find some communication on the great subject. The matter was one of most serious importance. Such a letter as that which was in his possession would no doubt create much surprise, and receive no ordinary attention. A *People's Banner* could hardly ask for a better bit of good fortune than the privilege of first publishing such a letter. It would no doubt be copied into every London paper, and into hundreds of provincial papers, and every journal so copying it would be bound to declare that it was taken from the columns of the *People's Banner*. It was, indeed, addressed "To the Editor of the *People's Banner*" in the printed slip which Mr. Slide had shown to Phineas Finn, though Kennedy himself had not prefixed to it any such direction. And the letter, in the hands of Quintus Slide, would not simply have been a letter. It might have been ground-work for, perhaps, some half dozen leading articles, all of a most attractive kind. Mr. Slide's high moral tone upon such an occasion would have been qualified to do good to every British matron, and to add virtues to the Bench of Bishops. All this he had postponed, with some inadequately defined idea that he could do better with the property in his hands by putting himself into personal communication with the persons concerned. If he could manage to reconcile such a husband to such a wife—or even to be conspicuous in an attempt to do so—and if he could make the old Earl and the young member of Parliament feel that he had spared them by abstaining from the publication, the results might be very beneficial. His conception of the matter had been somewhat hazy, and he had cer-

tainly made a mistake. But, as he walked from his home to Quartpot Alley, he little dreamed of the treachery with which he had been treated. "Has Phineas Finn been here?" he asked, as he took his accustomed seat within a small closet, that might be best described as a glass cage. Around him lay the débris of many past newspapers, and the germs of many future publications. To all the world except himself it would have been a chaos, but to him, with his experience, it was admirable order. No; Mr. Finn had not been there. And then, as he was searching among the letters for one from the member for Tankerville, the injunction was thrust into his hands. To say that he was aghast is but a poor form of speech for the expression of his emotion.

He had been "done"—"sold"—absolutely robbed by that wretchedly false Irishman whom he had trusted with all the confidence of a candid nature and an open heart! He had been most treacherously misused! Treachery was no adequate word for the injury inflicted on him. The more potent is a man, the less accustomed to endure injustice, and the more his power to inflict it, the greater is the sting and the greater the astonishment when he himself is made to suffer. Newspaper editors sport daily with the names of men of whom they do not hesitate to publish almost the severest words that can be uttered; but let an editor be himself attacked, even without his name, and he thinks that the thunder-bolts of heaven should fall upon the offender. Let his manners, his truth, his judgment, his honesty, or even his consistency, be questioned, and thunder-bolts are forth-coming, though they may not be from heaven. There should certainly be a thunder-bolt or two now, but Mr. Slide did not at first quite see how they were to be forged.

He read the injunction again and again. As far as the document went he knew its force, and recognized the necessity of obedience. He might, perhaps, be able to use the information contained in the letter from Mr. Kennedy, so as to harass Phineas and Lady Laura and the Earl, but he was at once aware that it must not be published. An editor is bound to avoid the meshes of the law, which are always infinitely more costly to companies, or things, or institutions than they are to individuals. Of fighting with Chancery he had no notion; but it should go hard with him if he did not have a fight with Phineas Finn. And then there arose another cause for deep sorrow. A paragraph was shown to him in a morning paper of that day which must, he thought, refer to Mr. Kennedy and Phineas Finn. "A rumor has reached us that a member of Parliament, calling yesterday afternoon upon a right honorable gentleman, a member of a late Government, at his hotel, was shot at by the latter in his sitting-room. Whether the rumor be true or not we have no means of saying, and therefore abstain from publishing names. We are informed that the gentleman who used the pistol was out of his mind. The bullet did not take effect." How cruel it was that such information should have reached the hands of a rival, and not fallen in the way of the *People's Banner*! And what a pity that the bullet should have been wasted! The paragraph must certainly refer to Phineas Finn and Ken-

nedy. Finn, a member of Parliament, had been sent by Slide himself to call upon Kennedy, a member of the late Government, at Kennedy's hotel. And the paragraph must be true. He himself had warned Finn that there would be danger in the visit. He had even prophesied murder—and murder had been attempted! The whole transaction had been, as it were, the very goods and chattels of the *People's Banner*, and the paper had been shamefully robbed of its property. Mr. Slide hardly doubted that Phineas Finn had himself sent the paragraph to an adverse paper, with the express view of adding to the injury inflicted upon the *Banner*. That day Mr. Slide hardly did his work effectively within his glass cage, so much was his mind affected, and at five o'clock, when he left his office, instead of going at once home to Mrs. Slide at Camden Town, he took an omnibus and went down to Westminster. He would at once confront the traitor who had deceived him.

It must be acknowledged on behalf of this editor that he did in truth believe that he had been hindered from doing good. The whole practice of his life had taught him to be confident that the editor of a newspaper must be the best possible judge—indeed, the only possible good judge—whether any statement or story should or should not be published. Not altogether without a conscience, and intensely conscious of such conscience as did constrain him, Mr. Quintus Slide imagined that no law of libel, no injunction from any Vice-Chancellor, no outward power or pressure whatever, was needed to keep his energies within their proper limits. He and his newspaper formed together a simply beneficent institution, any interference with which must of necessity be an injury to the public. Every thing done at the office of the *People's Banner* was done in the interest of the People—and, even though individuals might occasionally be made to suffer by the severity with which their names were handled in its columns, the general result was good. What are the sufferings of the few to the advantage of the many? If there be fault in high places, it is proper that it be exposed. If there be fraud, adulteries, gambling, and lasciviousness, or even quarrels and indiscretions among those whose names are known, let every detail be laid open to the light, so that the people may have a warning. That such details will make a paper "pay" Mr. Slide knew also; but it is not only in Mr. Slide's path of life that the bias of a man's mind may lead him to find that virtue and profit are compatible. An unprofitable newspaper can not long continue its existence, and, while existing, can not be widely beneficial. It is the circulation, the profitable circulation, of forty, fifty, sixty, or a hundred thousand copies through all the arteries and veins of the public body which is beneficent. And how can such circulation be effected unless the taste of the public be consulted? Mr. Quintus Slide, as he walked up Westminster Hall, in search of that wicked member of Parliament, did not at all doubt the goodness of his cause. He could not contest the Vice-Chancellor's injunction, but he was firm in his opinion that the Vice-Chancellor's injunction had inflicted an evil on the public at large, and he was unhappy within himself in that the power and majesty and goodness of the Press should

still be hampered by ignorance, prejudice, and favor for the great. He was quite sure that no injunction would have been granted in favor of Mr. Joseph Smith and Mr. John Jones.

He went boldly up to one of the policemen who sit guarding the door of the lobby of our House of Commons, and asked for Mr. Finn. The Cerberus on the left was not sure whether Mr. Finn was in the House, but would send in a card if Mr. Slide would stand on one side. For the next quarter of an hour Mr. Slide heard no more of his message, and then applied again to the Cerberus. The Cerberus shook his head, and again desired the applicant to stand on one side. He had done all that in him lay. The other watchful Cerberus standing on the right, observing that the intruder was not accommodated with any member, intimated to him the propriety of standing back in one of the corners. Our editor turned round upon the man as though he would bite him; but he did stand back, meditating an article on the gross want of attention to the public shown in the lobby of the House of Commons. Is it possible that any editor should endure any inconvenience without meditating an article? But the judicious editor thinks twice of such things. Our editor was still in his wrath when he saw his prey come forth from the House with a card—no doubt his own card. He leaped forward in spite of the policeman, in spite of any Cerberus, and seized Phineas by the arm. "I want just to have a few words," he said. He made an effort to repress his wrath, knowing that the whole world would be against him should he exhibit any violence of indignation on that spot; but Phineas could see it all in the fire of his eye.

"Certainly," said Phineas, retiring to the side of the lobby, with a conviction that the distance between him and the House was already sufficient.

"Can't you come down into Westminster Hall?"

"I should only have to come up again. You can say what you've got to say here."

"I've got a great deal to say. I never was so badly treated in my life; never." He could not quite repress his voice, and he saw that a policeman looked at him. Phineas saw it also.

"Because we have hindered you from publishing an untrue and very slanderous letter about a lady!"

"You promised me that you'd come to me yesterday."

"I think not. I think I said that you should hear from me—and you did."

"You call that truth—and honesty!"

"Certainly I do. Of course it was my first duty to stop the publication of the letter."

"You haven't done that yet."

"I've done my best to stop it. If you have nothing more to say I'll wish you good evening."

"I've a deal more to say. You were shot at, weren't you?"

"I have no desire to make any communication to you on any thing that has occurred, Mr. Slide. If I staid with you all the afternoon I could tell you nothing more. Good-evening."

"I'll crush you," said Quintus Slide, in a stage-whisper; "I will, as sure as my name is Slide."

Phineas looked at him and retired into the House, whither Quintus Slide could not follow

him, and the editor of the *People's Banner* was left alone in his anger.

"How a cock can crow on his own dunghill!" That was Mr. Slide's first feeling, as with a painful sense of diminished consequence he retraced his steps through the outer lobbies and down into Westminster Hall. He had been browbeaten by Phineas Finn, simply because Phineas had been able to retreat within those happy doors. He knew that to the eyes of all the policemen and strangers assembled Phineas Finn had been a hero, a Parliamentary hero, and he had been some poor outsider—to be ejected at once should he make himself disagreeable to the members. Nevertheless, had he not all the columns of the *People's Banner* in his pocket? Was he not great in the Fourth Estate—much greater than Phineas Finn in his estate? Could he not thunder every night so that an audience to be counted by hundreds of thousands should hear his thunder, whereas this poor member of Parliament must struggle night after night for an opportunity of speaking, and could then only speak to benches half deserted, or to a few members half asleep—unless the Press should choose to convert his words into thunder-bolts? Who could doubt for a moment with which lay the greater power? And yet this wretched Irishman, who had wriggled himself into Parliament on a petition, getting the better of a good, downright English John Bull by a quibble, had treated him with scorn—the wretched Irishman being for the moment like a cock on his own dunghill. Quintus Slide was not slow to tell himself that he also had an elevation of his own, from which he could make himself audible. In former days he had forgiven Phineas Finn more than once. If he ever forgave Phineas Finn again, might his right hand forget its cunning, and never again draw blood or tear a scalp.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FIRST THUNDER-BOLT.

It was not till after Mr. Slide had left him that Phineas wrote the following letter to Lady Laura:

"HOUSE OF COMMONS, March 1, 18—.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have a long story to tell, which I fear I shall find difficult in the telling; but it is so necessary that you should know the facts that I must go through with it as best I may. It will give you very great pain; but the result as regards your own position will not, I think, be injurious to you.

"Yesterday, Sunday, a man came to me who edits a newspaper, and whom I once knew. You will remember when I used to tell you in Portman Square of the amenities and angers of Mr. Slide—the man who wanted to sit for Loughton. He is the editor. He brought me a long letter from Mr. Kennedy himself, intended for publication, and which was already printed, giving an elaborate and, I may say, a most cruelly untrue account of your quarrel. I read the letter, but of course can not remember the words; nor, if I could remember them, should I repeat them. They contained all the old charges with which you are familiar, and which your unfortunate husband now desired to publish in consumma-

tion of his threats. Why Mr. Slide should have brought me the paper before publishing it I can hardly understand. But he did so, and told me that Mr. Kennedy was in town. We have managed among us to obtain a legal warrant for preventing the publication of the letter, and I think I may say that it will not see the light.

"When Mr. Slide left me I called on Mr. Kennedy, whom I found in a miserable little hotel in Judd Street, kept by Scotch people named Macpherson. They had come from the neighborhood of Lough Linter, and knew Mr. Kennedy well. This was yesterday afternoon, Sunday, and I found some difficulty in making my way into his presence. My object was to induce him to withdraw the letter, for at that time I doubted whether the law could interfere quickly enough to prevent the publication.

"I found your husband in a very sad condition. What he said or what I said I forget; but he was, as usual, intensely anxious that you should return to him. I need not hesitate now to say that he is certainly mad. After a while, when I expressed my assured opinion that you would not go back to Lough Linter, he suddenly turned round, grasped a revolver, and fired at my head. How I got out of the room I don't quite remember. Had he repeated the shot, which he might have done over and over again, he must have hit me. As it was, I escaped, and blundered down the stairs to Mrs. Macpherson's room.

"They whom I have consulted in the matter, namely, Barrington Erle and my particular friend, Mr. Low—to whom I went for legal assistance in stopping the publication—seem to think that I should have at once sent for the police, and given Mr. Kennedy in charge. But I did not do so, and hitherto the police have, I believe, no knowledge of what occurred. A paragraph appeared in one of the morning papers to-day, giving almost an accurate account of the matter, but mentioning neither the place nor any of the names. No doubt it will be repeated in all the papers, and the names will soon be known. But the result will be simply a general conviction as to the insanity of poor Mr. Kennedy—as to which they who know him have had for a long time but little doubt.

"The Macphersons seem to have been very anxious to screen their guest. At any other hotel, no doubt, the landlord would have sent for the police; but in this case the attempt was kept quite secret. They did send for George Kennedy, a cousin of your husband's, whom I think you know, and whom I saw this morning. He assures me that Robert Kennedy is quite aware of the wickedness of the attempt he made, and that he is plunged in deep remorse. He is to be taken down to Lough Linter to-morrow, and is—so says his cousin—as tractable as a child. What George Kennedy means to do I can not say; but for myself, as I did not send for the police at the moment, as I am told I ought to have done, I shall now do nothing. I don't know that a man is subject to punishment because he does not make complaint. I suppose I have a right to regard it all as an accident if I please.

"But for you this must be very important. That Mr. Kennedy is insane there can not now, I think, be a doubt; and therefore the question of your returning to him—as far as there has

been any question—is absolutely settled. None of your friends would be justified in allowing you to return. He is undoubtedly mad, and has done an act which is not murderous only on that conclusion. This settles the question so perfectly that you could, no doubt, reside in England now without danger. Mr. Kennedy himself would feel that he could take no steps to enforce your return after what he did yesterday. Indeed, if you could bring yourself to face the publicity, you could, I imagine, obtain a legal separation, which would give you again the control of your own fortune. I feel myself bound to mention this; but I give you no advice. You will no doubt explain all the circumstances to your father.

"I think I have now told you every thing that I need tell you. The thing only happened yesterday, and I have been all the morning busy getting the injunction, and seeing Mr. George Kennedy. Just before I began this letter that horrible editor was with me again, threatening me with all the penalties which an editor can inflict. To tell the truth, I do feel confused among them all, and still fancy that I hear the click of the pistol. That newspaper paragraph says that the ball went through my whiskers, which was certainly not the case; but a foot or two off is quite near enough for a pistol-ball.

"The Duke of Omnium is dying, and I have heard to-day that Madame Goesler, our old friend, has been sent for to Matching. She and I renewed our acquaintance the other day at Harrington.

"God bless you. Your most sincere friend,
"PHINEAS FINN.

"Do not let my news oppress you. The firing of the pistol is a thing done and over without evil results. The state of Mr. Kennedy's mind is what we have long suspected, and, melancholy though it be, should contain for you, at any rate, this consolation—that the accusations made against you would not have been made had his mind been unclouded."

Twice while Finn was writing this letter was he rung into the House for a division, and once it was suggested to him to say a few words of angry opposition to the Government on some not important subject under discussion. Since the beginning of the session hardly a night had passed without some verbal sparring, and very frequently the limits of Parliamentary decorum had been almost surpassed. Never within the memory of living politicians had political rancor been so sharp, and the feeling of injury so keen, both on the one side and on the other. The taunts thrown at the Conservatives, in reference to the Church, had been almost unendurable—and the more so because the strong expressions of feeling from their own party throughout the country were against them. Their own convictions also were against them. And there had for a while been almost a determination through the party to deny their leader and disclaim the bill. But a feeling of duty to the party had prevailed, and this had not been done. It had not been done; but the not doing of it was a sore burden on the half-broken shoulders of many a man who sat gloomily on the benches behind Mr. Daubeny. Men goaded as they were, by their opponents, by their natural friends, and by their